



Sumer

Civilizations of the Ancient World | Meeting #4

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Upcoming Dates

- Thursday, February 12
- Tuesday, February 17
- No class meeting

- Monday, March 9
- *Gilgamesh* Essay Due

- Sunday, February 8
- Responses for Week 2 Due

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Four things today

- Sumer
- The Epic of Gilgamesh
- Shamhat and Enkidu
- Writing

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Questions about whatever



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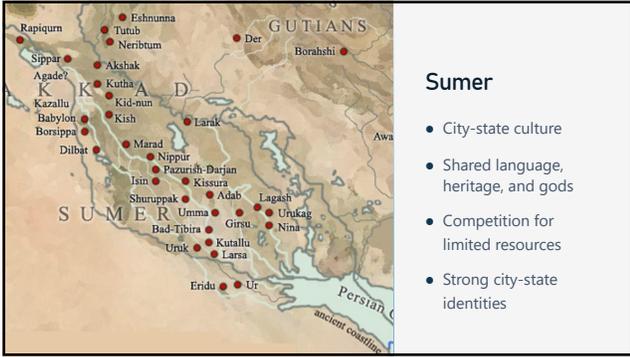
Sumer

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The Fertile Crescent



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Sumer

- City-state culture
- Shared language, heritage, and gods
- Competition for limited resources
- Strong city-state identities

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Rivalry for resources leads to warfare

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Ziggurat

- Massive temple at the heart of a Sumerian city-state
- Sacred home of the patron god
- Visible focus of city-state identity

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The Deluge

- Massive flood destroys cities of Sumer
- Lone survivor separated from humanity
- Sumerian gods are sometimes nurturing, sometimes destructive
- Death is universal



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Life and afterlife

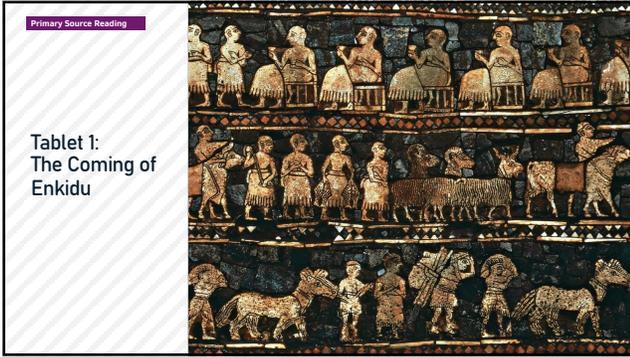
- Sumerian afterlife is a place of impotence
- Gods cannot be trusted
- The living must act
- Build to create a strong and enduring future



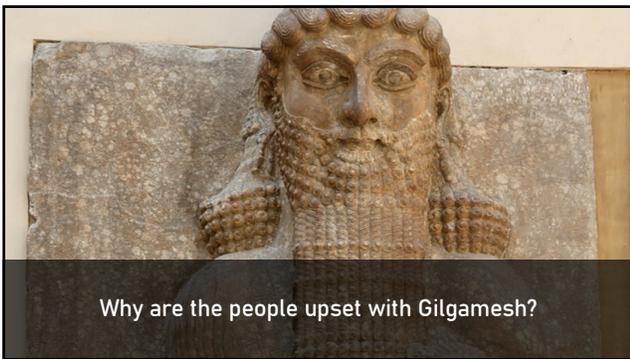
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The Epic of Gilgamesh

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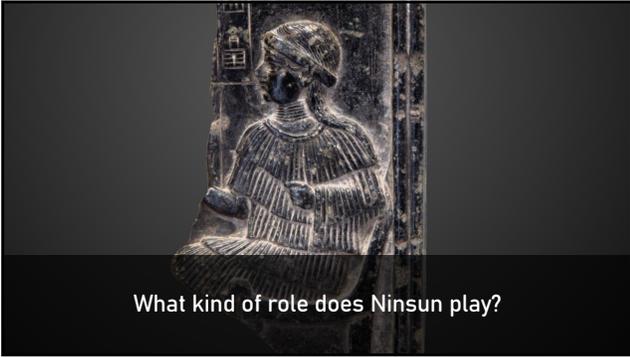
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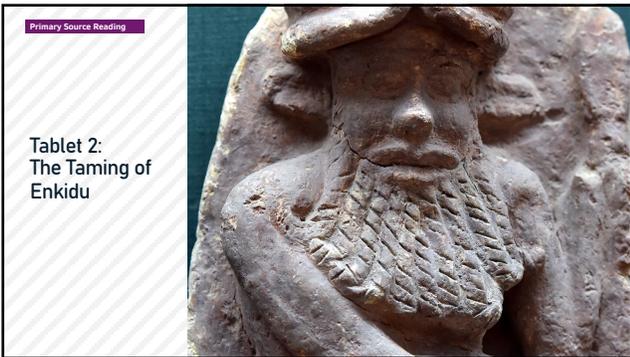
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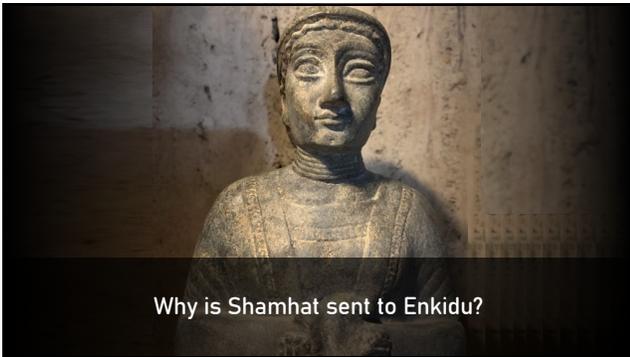


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Why do the gods create Enkidu to fix Gilgamesh?

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Why is Shamhat sent to Enkidu?

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Shamhat and Enkidu

- Enkidu as the answer to the problem of Gilgamesh
- Shamhat doing the "work of woman"
- Creates a bond that links a man to the community = wife
- Creates a future citizen = mother
- Only a harlot could do this

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Some themes in Gilgamesh

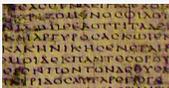
- Individual and community
 - Gilgamesh places himself ahead of community and so is not civilized
 - King must protect community
 - Enkidu becomes a part of community
- Gender
 - Male nature is to be a wild beast (Enkidu and Gilgamesh)
 - "The work of woman" is to transform beast-men into citizens as mothers and and wives
- Mortal and divine
 - Gods are capricious and untrustworthy because they do not die
 - Mortals must grow in order to build and contribute before death
- Bonds between individuals
 - Men and women
 - Men and men

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Writing

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Forms of writing

PICTOGRAPHS	SYLLABARIES	ALPHABETS
Each character represents a word or a concept	Each character represents a syllable (consonant + vowel)	Each character represents a sound
 <small>Cuneiform</small>	 <small>Linear B</small>	 <small>Greek</small>
 <small>Hieroglyphs</small>	 <small>Aramaic-Cypriot</small>	 <small>Latin</small>

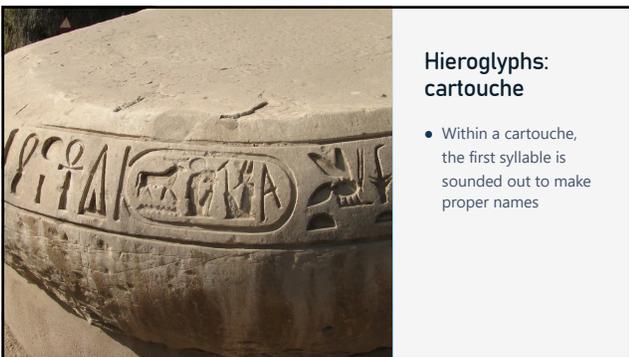
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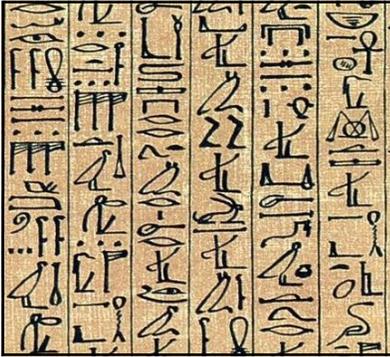
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From stone to papyrus

- Papyrus is made from woven reeds
- Fluidity of ink version leads to a more informal script
- Still difficult to learn

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The phonetic alphabet

- Bronze Age scripts are pictographic or syllabic
- Many characters with a high learning curve
- No phonetic scripts until the Iron Age

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